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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, September 12, 1935.

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Hello Folks. The pleasant odors of boiling catsup and the aroma of apple butter in the making that are coming from our kitchens these days are gentle reminders that the fall season is upon us and that it is high time to be thinking about getting our winter's supply of fruits and vegetables gathered and stored. Jack Frost may pay some of you northern folks a visit within the next week or ten days, while it may be six weeks or two months before the more southern parts of the country will be in any danger of a frost, even a light frost.

Be that as it may, it is a good idea to be getting everything in readiness to care for the products of our gardens and orchards when the proper time arrives. You folks who have crops of apples on your trees, especially those of you who grow fruit for home use, should be making plans to store at least the best of the crop. If you have some nice Grimes Golden, or any variety that ripens during the early fall I would advise you to pack a few baskets or even a few barrels and store them in your local cold storage warehouse provided you have one in your town. In case you place any of your apples in cold storage by all means secure a supply of the shredded oiled paper for mixing with the apples in order to prevent storage scald. Ordinary waxed paper will not do the trick and you must have the genuine oiled paper that is used by commercial growers in packing their storage apples. You can get this paper from any of the dealers in orchard supplies. Just mix about one-half pound of the oiled paper with each bushel of apples.

Most of the apples that are kept for home use are stored in cellars and the storage cellar should be cleaned, then the windows and doors opened wide during cool nights and closed during the daytime so as to lower the temperature.

Here is a suggestion that will interest a lot of you southern folks. You may recall that some time ago I told you about a new method of ripening keiffer pears. No it was not some mysterious way of ripening them overnight with ethalene gas or anything of that sort but simply picking the full-grown keiffer pears very carefully and placing them in a room where the temperature can be kept right close to 60 degrees. Experiments have shown that by keeping the pears at 60 degrees for a period of two weeks or longer, those hard, woody places in their flesh will all soften and those woody keiffer pears will become mellow and juicy and almost, but not quite, as good as bartletts. A temperature of 70 degrees or higher will make the woody cells tougher and the flavor becomes poorer. If you want to keep the keiffer pears well into the winter you first place them in cold storage at about 38 degrees then you bring them

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out and store them for a time at 60 degrees and you will get nice, mellow fruit. Where you're canning keiffer pears it pays to ripen them at 60 degrees before you can them.

I can remember when I was a youngster we used to gather the pears and store them in the drawers of an old dresser in an upstairs room and without knowing why, we were providing just about the right temperature conditions for the ripening of those pears.

We've learned a lot recently about the storage of potatoes and sweetpotatoes. For example we have found that a storage temperature of about 50 degrees gives us the best eating quality in our white potatoes. Lucky for us the temperature of the ordinary cellar is about 50 degrees during the fall and early winter and so we have about the ideal conditions for keeping white potatoes.

Now when it comes to sweet potatoes we have a different condition and they want a curing period at a temperature of about 85 or 90 degrees just as soon as they are dug. Plenty of ventilation is essential during the curing period of ten days to two weeks as we want to dry the sweetpotatoes very thoroughly. After the curing period they can be kept at about 55 degrees but always dry.

In case you have a patch of tomatoes where the vines are loaded with nice, full grown but green tomatoes at the time Jack Frost pays you a visit, don't wait until those green tomatoes get frost-bitten but gather them and spread them on shelves or on the floor in a room where the temperature will be in the neighborhood of 55 or 60 degrees. Sprinkle a little water over the tomatoes from time to time to prevent their shriveling and the majority of those tomatoes will ripen. Sometimes you can have ripened tomatoes until about Christmas by this method. The green tomatoes that are too small for ripening may be used for making green tomato pickles and other green tomato products.

Now, if you have a pencil and paper handy perhaps you may want to jot down those temperatures as I repeat them.

For keiffer pears, 60 degrees. For fall apples and the more perishable sorts, place in cold storage at near the freezing point. For the home storage of winter apples, keep them as cold as possible but above freezing. For white potatoes 45 to 50 degrees. For sweetpotatoes, a curing period at 85 degrees with stove heat then store them at 55 degrees. For ripening green tomatoes after frost, store at 55 or 60 degrees.

